

her son were now gathered the latter's early friends, who, like him, had come from Aix to Paris. Paul Cfeanne, Jean-Baptiste Bailie, Marius Eoux, and Solari, with Zola himself, formed a small, enthusiastic, ambitious band, such as was afterwards described so faithfully in "L'GEuvre." From time to time also, Antony Valabrkgue, the future poet and critic, visited the capital, and on returning to Aix corresponded with Zola, whose letters¹ were very interesting.

One gleans from them that in 1864 Zola submitted some of his poetical pieces to L'Acaddmie des Jeux Floraux of Toulouse, which "crowned" none of them; that he attended the evening literary lectures at the Salle des Conferences in the Eue de la Paix, and "reported," for some paper which is not specified, the accounts given of Chopin, "Gil Bias," Shakespeare, Aristophanes, La Bruykre's "Caractferes," Michelet's "I/Amour" and the philosophy of Moli&re.² In April that year he had as yet done nothing with the various short stories to which reference has been made; and he thought of leaving them in abeyance while he completed the novel, "La Confession de Claude," which he had begun in 1862. Three months later, however, the stories were sold, and Zola wrote to Valabrkgue: <e The battle has been short, and

I am astonished that I have not suffered more. I am now on the threshold: the plain is vast and I may yet break

¹ "La Grande Revue," Paris, 1893, Vol. XXVI, pp. 1-19, 241-262.

² These lectures were given first in the Kue de la Paix, later in the Rue Cadet, and later still in the Rue Scribe, They were most interesting and instructive. The present writer often attended them in the last years of the Empire to hear Deschanel the elder, J. J. "Weiss, Eugene Pelletan, Lahou-laye, Legouve", St. Marc-Girardin, Henri Martin, Sareey, "Wblowski, and others.